

## Message

---

**From:** abcgov@npogroups.org [abcgov@npogroups.org]  
on behalf of Steve Holmer via abcgov list [abcgov@npogroups.org]  
**Sent:** 4/14/2020 4:20:56 PM  
**To:** abcgov@npogroups.org  
**Subject:** Bird Conservation Policy Updates  
**Attachments:** ATT00001.txt

## Migratory Birds

[Column: 3 billion birds have vanished from our skies. Can we ever bring them back? Los Angeles Times Interview](#)

### Wide Array of Interests Oppose Migratory Bird Treaty Act Rulemaking

Senators, Representatives, States, Scientists, and a large coalition of conservation organizations and [nearly 200,000 of their supporters](#) all commented in opposition to a proposed rule weakening protection against incidental take in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. American Bird Conservancy's comments recommended [withdrawing the proposed rule and proceeding with an environmental impact statement](#) that analyzes the environmental benefits of an incidental take permit.

The Migratory Bird Protection Act, [H.R. 5552](#), which now awaits a vote on the House floor, would reinforce MBTA protection against incidental take, and create an incidental take permit that would provide industry regulatory certainty in exchange for use of available best management practices that reduce bird mortality. A large coalition of conservation groups are asking for a [significant funding increase](#) to address the large-scale decline of bird populations.

## Endangered Species

**Endangered species are losing habitat more than twice as fast on non-protected private land as compared to national public lands.**

[The study](#), authored by a Tufts University researcher and scientists at the conservation group Defenders of Wildlife, used satellite imagery to track habitat loss of 24 species over 31 years. The researchers found that imperiled species lost 3.6 percent of their habitat on federally-protected land, and 8.6 percent of their habitat on private lands with no protections. State lands and lands protected by non-governmental organizations were in the middle, losing between 4 and 5 percent of habitat for the species being tracked. This research illustrates the critical importance of America's federal lands system for conserving wildlife habitat and the urgent need for better protections on other land ownerships,

[Birdlife Extinction Study](#)

A new study shows that global conservation action has reduced the effective extinction rate of birds by an astonishing 40%. Thanks to conservation over the last three decades, Critically Endangered species are now twice as likely to improve in status and move to a lower threat category as they are to deteriorate and become extinct. Without such conservation efforts, the opposite would be true.

## Forest Carbon

### Why Old-Growth Trees Are Crucial to Fighting Climate Change

Brooke Jarvis, Science, 04.01.2020

Nature is already soaking away a lot of carbon for us. It could soak up a lot more—if we help.

**37%:** The part that “natural climate solutions” could play between now and 2030 to keep global temperature rise below 2 degrees C.

#### Meeting GHG reduction targets requires accounting for all forest sector emissions

TaraWHudiburg<sup>1,4</sup>, Beverly E Law<sup>2</sup>, William RMoomaw<sup>3</sup>, Mark E Harmon<sup>2</sup> and Jeffrey E Stenzel<sup>1</sup>.

Atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs) must be reduced to avoid an unsustainable climate. Because carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and sequestered in forests and wood products, mitigation strategies to sustain and increase forest carbon sequestration are being developed. These strategies require full accounting of forest sector GHG budgets.

We find that Western US forests are net sinks because there is a positive net balance of forest carbon uptake exceeding losses due to harvesting, wood product use, and combustion by wildfire. However, over 100 years of wood product usage is reducing the potential annual sink by an average of 21%, suggesting forest carbon storage can become more effective in climate mitigation through reduction in harvest, longer rotations, or more efficient wood product usage. Of the ~10 700 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents removed from west coast forests since 1900, 81% of it has been returned to the atmosphere or deposited in landfills.

#### Coalition Challenges Washington State Plan to Boost Marbled Murrelet Conservation

A coalition consisting of Washington Environmental Council, Conservation Northwest, Olympic Forest Coalition, and 6 individuals filed a lawsuit in Washington State Court arguing that the State of WA has the legal discretion to adopt a long-term conservation strategy that would have provided more conservation than the current plan. The Oregon fish and wildlife commissioners are reconsidering whether to grant endangered species protections for the marbled murrelet, a small seabird that nests in coastal old growth forests (Capital Press).

#### Chief Scientist Dr. Dominick DellaSala testifies in the Oregon legislature

Chief Scientist Dr. Dominick DellaSala testifies in the Oregon legislature. Chief Scientist Dr. Dominick DellaSala testifies in the Oregon legislature on a proposal by state legislatures to provide \$4 billion for logging Oregon’s forests, which would be a maladaptive climate change response.

#### Mapping Tool Reveals Extent of Past and Ongoing Logging in Oregon

In a state covered in nearly 30 million acres of forested lands, it can be difficult to get a sense of the scale and extent of logging across Oregon. A view from above, looking down from an airplane window for example,

can give you a better sense, but this is still just a snapshot in time. This is one reason Oregon Wild volunteer Ricardo Morin spent hundreds of hours over the past year developing a “Logging in Oregon” web tool for analyzing the extent of logging on both public and private lands in Oregon, both historically and recently.

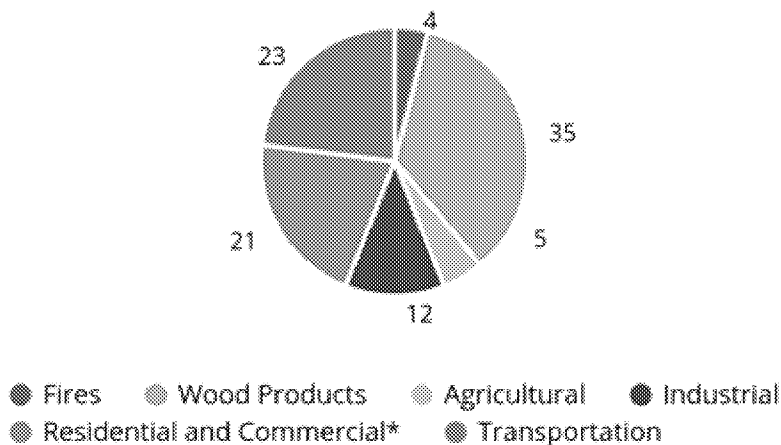
#### Bear Grub Timber Sale in Oregon Threatens Northern Spotted Owl Habitat

The forests of the project area support endangered wildlife such as the Northern spotted owl and Pacific fisher, significant populations of the Great gray owl, and more common species such as black bear, cougar, coyote and large herds of black tailed deer. The region's mature, closed canopy forests provide nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the Northern spotted owl, denning and resting habitat for the Pacific fisher, nesting habitat for Great gray owls, and thermal cover for a variety of wildlife species.

#### Final letter opposing H.R. 5859, the Trillion Trees Act

While we support ecologically sound tree-planting as a means to increase carbon sequestration and climate adaptation, this legislation presents a false solution for addressing the climate crisis by misallocating resources to focus on industrial logging rather than on urgently needed steep reductions of fossil fuel emissions. The bill would significantly increase logging across America’s federal forests, convert millions of acres into industrial tree plantations, increase carbon emissions, increase wildfire risk, and harm wildlife and watersheds.

# Percent carbon dioxide emissions by sector in Oregon 2011-2015



Sources: Oregon Global Warming Commission and Oregon State/University of Idaho Study

Note: Utility fuel use is subtracted from residential and commercial data reported by the Oregon Global Warming Commission

[SEAN WILSON](#)

## Guest View: Nature's climate solution

Every fall, raging hurricanes and urban-wildfires remind us of the inconvenient truth: the climate is getting increasingly weird and dangerous. Scientists have made it clear that if we hope to ...[read more at](#).

## Researchers find some forests crucial for climate change mitigation, biodiversity

A study by Oregon State University researchers has identified forests in the western United States that should be preserved for their potential to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, as well as to enhance biodiversity. Those forests are mainly along the Pacific coast and in the Cascade Range, with pockets of them in the northern Rocky Mountains as well. Not logging those forests would be the carbon dioxide equivalent of halting eight years' worth of fossil fuel burning in the western lower 48, the scientists found, noting that making land stewardship a higher societal priority is crucial for altering climate change trajectory.

## There's Carbon in Them Thar Hills: But How Much? Could Pacific Northwest Forests Store More?

In 1994, federal agencies overhauled the management of forests in the PNW with the development of the NW Forest Plan. Prior to that point, our forests emitted far more carbon they absorbed due to aggressive clearcut logging – but thanks to the NW Forest Plan, our forests are now a “carbon sink,” meaning they absorb more carbon than they emit.

In fact, the National Forests of Oregon and Washington accumulate **7 million metric tons of carbon per year**, the equivalent of **24% of all fossil fuel emissions in both states!** Despite these gains, **our National Forests are only storing 63 percent of their maximum carbon storage capacity**, which means there are significant opportunities to dramatically increase the amount of carbon stored in our forests.

Webinar: Wood, Forests & Embodied Carbon

## Fire and Wildlife

Chrystal Clear Timber Sale Threatening Owls Rejected by Federal Court

This 12,000 acre logging project on the Mt. Hood National Forest proposed thousands of acres of mature and old growth forests in ways that the best available science shows could increase fire risk, and adversely affect threatened Northern Spotted Owls. The ruling didn't simply ask the Forest Service to tweak a few sections of their Environmental Assessment—it recognized, as Bark, Cascadia Wildlands and Oregon Wild asserted—that the scope of this project requires the more in-depth analysis of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Birds and Burned Forests: Patterns of bird species occurrence in relation to anthropogenic and wildfire disturbance: Management implications

Two important management implications follow directly from these findings: (1) the presence of the full complement of bird species in a landscape cannot be maintained through land management that either suppresses fire or acts to reduce overall fire severity through widespread forest thinning or through the application of homogeneous, low-severity, prescribed burning across the broader landscape—only severe fire can produce the variety of post-fire conditions used by species that are nowhere more abundant than in burned forests; and (2) the presence of many species (especially those most specialized to use burned forest conditions) is incompatible with both pre-fire and post-fire timber harvesting.

Money to Burn

In addition to the concerns that the post-fire logging is counterproductive, Hanson and other forest defenders are raising alarms that misappropriated federal dollars are funding much of the work. Moreover, they argue that some of the logged trees will likely be processed into fuel for a biomass energy facility—a second round of burning that, according to some climate scientists and air quality experts, represents a terrible climate calculus that puts even more carbon pollution into the atmosphere.

Forest, Wildfire and Climate Change Factsheet and Messaging Guide

## Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation

**Energy Development Driving Down Grouse Populations**

**ABSTRACT** Energy infrastructure and associated habitat loss can lead to reduced reproductive rates for a variety of species including the greater sage-grouse. From 2008–2014, we collected data in 6 study areas in Wyoming, USA, containing 4 primary types of renewable and nonrenewable energy development. Our research focused on press disturbance (i.e., disturbance sustained after initial disturbance and associated with existing energy infrastructure and

human activity). Our results suggest exposure to press disturbance during nesting and brood-rearing was related to lower nest and brood survival. Our analysis of nest survival suggested that the likelihood of a successful nest was negatively associated with the amount of press disturbance within an 8-km<sup>2</sup> area. Broods exposed to any press disturbance within a 1-km<sup>2</sup> area were less likely to survive compared to broods not exposed to press disturbance. Female sage-grouse consistently used habitat with lower disturbance levels during reproductive periods. Greater than 90% of nest and brood-rearing locations were in habitat with <3% press disturbance within a 2.7-km<sup>2</sup> area. Our findings underscore the importance of minimizing disturbance to maintain viable sage-grouse populations. © 2020 The Wildlife Society.

## **Judge Voids Nearly 1 Million Acres of Oil and Gas Leases, Saying Policy Undercut Public Input**

According to *The Washington Post*, “A federal judge in Idaho ruled Thursday that a Trump administration policy limiting public input on oil and gas leasing decisions was ‘arbitrary and capricious,’ overturning the 2018 directive and voiding nearly 1 million acres of leases out West as a result. The ruling by U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Ronald E. Bush represented a win for environmentalists, who challenged the leasing policy as part of a broader effort to block drilling in habitat for the imperiled greater sage-grouse. The contested area spans 67 million acres across 11 Western states. [The Washington Post, 2/27/20 (=)]

### Connolly recommendations re: SG conservation measures

Today we'll look at solutions to problems facing sage-grouse. Remember, most declines are related to three major factors: habitat loss/degradation, infrastructure development, and West Nile Virus.

### The impact of wind energy facilities on grouse: a systematic review

#### **Abstract**

There is increasing concern about the impact of the current boom in wind energy facilities (WEF) and associated infrastructure on wildlife. However, the direct and indirect effects of these facilities on the mortality, occurrence and behavior of rare and threatened species are poorly understood. We conducted a literature review to examine the potential impacts of WEF on grouse species. We studied whether grouse (1) collide with wind turbines, (2) show behavioural responses in relation to wind turbine developments, and (3) if there are documented effects of WEF on their population sizes or dynamics.

Five grouse species have been found to collide with wind turbines, in particular with the towers. Fifteen studies reported behavioural responses in relation to wind turbine facilities in grouse (seven species), including spatial avoidance, displacement of lekking or nesting sites, or the time invested in breeding vs. non-breeding behavior.

Grouse were affected at up to distances of 500 m by WEF infrastructure, with indications of effects also at bigger distances. In six cases, a local reduction in grouse abundance was reported in areas with wind turbines, which possibly affected population size. We advise applying the precautionary principle by keeping grouse habitats free of wind energy developments, in particular where populations are small or locally threatened. Future studies should preferably apply a long-term before-after-control-impact design for multiple areas to allow for more general conclusions to be drawn on the effects of WEF on rare and threatened wildlife species.

## **Pesticides**

Letter to the Editor Apr 2, 2020

### **Positive steps taken to protect Marylanders from chlorpyrifos**

Steve Holmer, vice president of policy American Bird Conservancy

Thank you for your recent story highlighting the Maryland Legislature's action toward protecting local communities from the dangerous pesticide chlorpyrifos which poses a serious health risk to humans, especially children. Additionally, its documented threats to wildlife are formidable and can be pervasive. In a draft biological evaluation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that the pesticide is "likely to adversely affect" 97 percent of all threatened and endangered animal species, including more than 100 listed birds.

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) appreciates the efforts of legislators to safeguard residents and wildlife from the harmful effects of this chemical. Positive momentum by states to protect against this pesticide is critically needed, especially in light of persistent inaction at the federal level. ABC asks that Governor Hogan protect Marylanders and the state's wildlife from chlorpyrifos by signing the use-prohibition legislation into law.

## **California Puts Freeze on New Uses of Bee-killing Pesticides**

California's freeze on new neonicotinoid uses and products covers all new and pending applications and will be lifted once the agency finishes an ongoing evaluation of the pesticides. California's evaluation, which is being done in conjunction with the U.S. EPA, has identified harms to pollinators, aquatic insects and birds from the use of neonicotinoids.

The state's efforts to prevent expansion of harmful neonicotinoid pesticides stands in sharp contrast to the EPA's decision last month to consider allowing the spraying of the highly toxic pesticide thiamethoxam on tens of millions of acres of wheat, barley, corn, sorghum, alfalfa, rice and potatoes. On the same day it began considering approving broader use of thiamethoxam, the EPA released multiple scientific assessments that found commonly used neonicotinoid pesticides can kill and harm birds of all sizes. The EPA analysis found that if neonic-treated seeds make up just 1 percent to 6 percent of a bird's diet, serious harms could result.

Early last year the EPA changed from mandatory to voluntary a common-sense rule that would have placed limited restrictions on neonics when commercial honeybees were present in fields.

Neonicotinoids are a class of pesticides known to have both acute and chronic effects on honeybees, birds, butterflies and other pollinator species, and they are a major factor in overall pollinator declines. These systemic insecticides cause entire plants, including pollen and fruit, to become toxic to pollinators; they are also slow to break down and therefore build up in the environment.

A large and growing body of independent science links neonicotinoids to catastrophic bee declines. Twenty-nine independent scientists who conducted a global review of more than 1,000 independent studies on neonicotinoids found overwhelming evidence linking the pesticides to declines in populations of bees, birds, earthworms, butterflies and other wildlife. (Center for Biological Diversity)

**For more information please contact Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy, American Bird Conservancy, [sholmer@abcbirds.org](mailto:sholmer@abcbirds.org).**

To be removed from the list, send any message to:

[abcgov-unsubscribe@npogroups.org](mailto:abcgov-unsubscribe@npogroups.org)

**Steve Holmer**  
Vice President of Policy

American Bird Conservancy  
4301 Connecticut Ave. NW #451  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
202-888-7490 | skype: sholmerabc  
[sholmer@abcbirds.org](mailto:sholmer@abcbirds.org)

**Connect with American Bird Conservancy**

[abcbirds.org](http://abcbirds.org) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Bird Conservation Alliance](#) | [ABC Videos](#)



---

You received this message as a subscriber on the list:

[abcgov@npogroups.org](mailto:abcgov@npogroups.org)

To be removed from the list, send any message to:

[abcgov-unsubscribe@npogroups.org](mailto:abcgov-unsubscribe@npogroups.org)

For all list information and functions, see:

<http://npogroups.org/lists/info/abcgov>